



Department of Justice

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MONTANA MAN SENTENCED FOR RECEIPT OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

BILLINGS – Kenneth Robert Hall, a 64-year-old resident of Elliston, was sentenced today to a term of 60 months in federal prison in connection with his guilty plea to receipt of child pornography. Hall was also ordered to pay a special assessment of \$100, forfeit his computer equipment, and will be under supervision for 7 years.

In an Offer of Proof filed by the United States, the government stated it would have proved at trial the following:

Beginning in April 2006, the ICE Cyber Crimes Center (C3) initiated an investigation into a criminal organization operating approximately 18 commercial child pornography websites on the Internet. The investigation, known as Operation Flicker, has identified nearly 5,000 people in the United States alone who have paid to subscribe to child pornography websites operated by this organization. The criminal organization operating the commercial child pornography websites was "Home Collection." The organization used various PayPal accounts in various business names to process the payments for access to these member-restricted websites.

C3 agents made numerous undercover purchases of child pornography from the organization's various websites. They used the organization's various business name PayPal accounts to send in payment, including "Bullet Proof Soft" as one of the businesses.

C3 sent leads to ICE field offices to investigate their local purchasers. An agent was assigned to a lead involving Hall as a purchaser during Operation Flicker. On December 3, 2006, Hall had purchased access to a member restricted website associated with the subject identifier "Boys Say Go" and paid \$79.95 for a 30-day subscription to the site. He made the payment to the PayPal account for "Belfast LTD," known to be one of the organization's businesses.

On July 23, 2007, agents went to Hall's residence and seized his computer. A forensic examination found numerous images of child pornography saved in Hall's user area. Evidence of his membership and visits to the website were also found. The images included prepubescent children or children under the age of 12, and images of sadistic or masochistic conduct or other depictions of violence. The images were received by Hall via the Internet and his computer.

The investigation a cooperative effort between the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation and the Helena Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Marcia K. Hurd prosecuted the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the Department of Justice launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

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